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Big Cypress National Preserve News Release

3/20/02 For Immediate Release Sandra Snell-Dobert 941-695-1107

Changes to ORV Permit Procedures at Big Cypress National Preserve

Superintendent John Donahue announced today that beginning March 22, there will be minor changes to the days that recreational off-road vehicle permits will be issued at Big Cypress National Preserve Visitor Center. Off-road vehicle permits, inspections and the orientation class required for all off-road vehicle users in the Preserve will now be available on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"This change is necessary because demand has lessened as the program has become institutionalized and our staffing levels are dropping as seasonal employees leave the area." Donahue stated. "In order to maintain fast and friendly service to all of our visitors, we need to concentrate permit processing on those days on which we have the majority of staff on duty and the demand is greatest."

Ranger-led activities, including canoe trips, campfire programs and swamp walks will continue through March 23. All other services normally available at the visitor center, including the movie and book sales as well as information and orientation will continue. Visitor center hours remain 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily.